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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 003634

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FOR ILN; NEA; WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC/WEUROPE; DOC FOR ITA/EUR/FR
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL
REPORT MIDDLE EAST - ABBAS TO WASHINGTON EUROPEAN ISSUES -
REFERENDUM

PARIS - THURSDAY, MAY 26, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

- [1. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL REPORT](#)
- [2. MIDDLE EAST - ABBAS TO WASHINGTON](#)
- [3. EUROPEAN ISSUES - REFERENDUM](#)

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

D-3: FRONT PAGES CONTINUE TO BE DEVOTED TO THE EU CONSTITUTION
WHILE PRESIDENT CHIRAC IS SCHEDULED TO ADDRESS THE NATION THIS
EVENING ON NATIONAL TELEVISION AND RADIO TO PROMOTE THE 'YES.'
SEVERAL EDITORIALS COMMENT ON WHAT SHOULD BE THE PRESIDENT'S
APPROACH, WITH LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION, A SUPPORTER OF THE
'YES,' SUGGESTING THAT THE PRESIDENT "DISASSOCIATE THE EU
REFERENDUM FROM NATIONAL CONCERNS" BY PROPOSING TO DISSOLVE
THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND CALL FOR EARLY LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS
IN SEPTEMBER. IN LE FIGARO EDITORIALIST ALEXIS BEZET
CHARACTERIZES THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS AS "THE LAST CHANCE
PITCH." AN OP-ED IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION BY COLUMNIST
JACQUES AMALRIC CONTENDS THAT THE U.S. WOULD PREFER A 'NO'
VOTE. (SEE PART C)

IN INTERNATIONAL NEWS THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL REPORT
ON HUMAN RIGHTS ELICITS CRITICAL ARTICLES ABOUT U.S. ALLEGED
CASES OF TORTURE, AS WELL AS EDITORIALS IN THE REGIONAL PRESS.
(SEE PART C) MAHMOUD ABBAS'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON IS REPORTED.
IN LE FIGARO CORRESPONDENT PHILIPPE GELIE SUGGESTS THAT "A NEW
TONE" HAS EMERGED IN WASHINGTON AND THAT PRESIDENT BUSH MAY BE
FORCED TO "GET PERSONALLY INVOLVED" IN THE PEACE PROCESS. (SEE
PART C)

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL REPORT

"CROSSING THE LINE"

HERVE CANNET IN REGIONAL LA NOUVELLE REPUBLIQUE DU CENTRE
(05/26): "THE U.S. AND GREAT BRITAIN, IN REACTION TO THESE
KILLERS (THE TERRORISTS) HAVE NEVERTHELESS CROSSED THE LINE BY
NORMALIZING THE USE OF TORTURE AND BY SACRIFICING, OFFICIALLY
AND IN THE NAME OF THEIR OWN SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND
DIGNITY, WHICH THEY CLAIM TO OTHERWISE DEFEND: IN AFGHANISTAN,
IN IRAQ OR IN THE INFAMOUS PRISON OF GUANTANAMO, 'THE NEW
GULAG OF OUR TIMES,' AND A ZONE OF LAWLESSNESS. BEHIND THESE
ACCUSATIONS, WHICH CANNOT BE JUSTIFIED, LURK ALL MANNER OF
TORTURERS EVERYWHERE UNITING TO CHALLENGE HUMAN RIGHTS. THE
SHAMEFUL SILENCE OF THE WORLD AND THE UN MUST NOT LET AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL'S CRY ECHO IN A DESERT OF GOOD INTENTIONS."

"TORTURE AND SEMANTICS"

JACQUES CAMUS IN REGIONAL LA REPUBLIQUE DU CENTRE (05/26):
"THE AI REPORT IS A PAINFUL CATALOGUE OF HORRORS. THE REPORT
ZEALOUSLY POINTS AN ACCUSING FINGER AT ONE AND ALL. IT IS
REGRETTABLE THAT THE U.S. IS CRITICIZED WITH AS MUCH
INSISTENCE AS NORTH KOREA. BUT OUR DEMOCRACIES MUST SERVE AS
EXAMPLES. IN THIS REGARD AI'S CONDEMNATION OF
INSTITUTIONALIZED TORTURE BY THE AMERICANS IN THE NAME OF AN
IDEAL OF JUSTICE, IN THE PRISONS OF BAGRAM, GUANTANAMO AND ABU
GHARAIB, ARE UNDERSTANDABLE. BY PLAYING WITH SEMANTICS AND
CALLING TORTURE 'SENSORY MANIPULATION' THE WHITE HOUSE IS
LOOKING TO REMOVE GUILT FROM THE GUILTY. THIS IS NO MORE
TOLERABLE THAN THE HUMILIATION INFLICTED BY U.S. SOLDIERS."

"AMNESTY DENOUNCES 'GUANTANAMO THE GULAG'"

JACQUES DUPOUICH IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (05/26): "THE
WORST EXAMPLE GIVEN IN THE AI REPORT IS THAT OF THE U.S. .
WHICH HAS 'REDEFINED' THE NOTION OF TORTURE AS PART OF ITS WAR
AGAINST TERRORISM. THE INVENTORY OF ATROCITIES, INJUSTICES AND
NON-IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW ARE INDEED
DEPRESSING."

"FOR AI, GUANTANAMO IS A 'MODERN GULAG'"

JEAN-PIERRE LANGELLIER IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LE MONDE (05/26):
"CONTINUOUS AND MASSIVE VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AROUND THE
WORLD ARE A BETRAYAL OF A PROMISE MADE BY THE WORLD'S LEADERS,

AND FOREMOST BY THE MOST POWERFUL OF THEM ALL: THIS IS THE MAIN ACCUSATION MADE BY AI IN ITS ANNUAL REPORT. IN THIS CATALOGUE OF HORRORS, GOOD NEWS IS SCARCE AND ALL THE MORE PRECIOUS. AI IS SATISFIED WITH SEVERAL DECISIONS MADE BY THE U.S. SUPREME COURT REGARDING SEVERAL GUANTANAMO PRISONERS."

"THE U.S. ON THE BENCH OF THE ACCUSED"
SACHA BALIT VANDERBROUCK IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER FRANCE SOIR (05/26): "AI IS DENOUNCING A 'NEW WORLD ORDER' WITH AT ITS CORE THE WAR AGAINST TERROR. AND ON THE BENCH OF THE ACCUSED STANDS THE U.S. WHICH CLAIMS TO BE A NATION OF JUSTICE AND FREEDOM, WHILE SOME OF ITS SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN ACCUSED OF TORTURE AND ILL TREATMENT IN THE IRAQI PRISON OF ABU GHARAIB AND IN GUANTANAMO, WHICH AI CALLS A 'MODERN TIMES GULAG.' FOR AI, WASHINGTON IS INAUGURATING NEW TERMINOLOGY., USING TRENDY MANAGEMENT VOCABULARY TO SWEETEN WHAT IS TORTURE, CALLING IT ENVIRONMENTAL MANIPULATION. MORE SERIOUS EVEN IS THE FACT THAT BY GIVING IN TO SUCH PRACTICES, THE FIRST WORLD POWER IS ENCOURAGING OTHERS DO TO DO LIKEWISE."
MIDDLE EAST - ABBAS TO WASHINGTON

"ABBAS WANTS BUSH TO GET INVOLVED"
PHILIPPE GELIE IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION (05/26): "THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT IS CONVINCED OF ONE THING: CHANGE IN THE MIDDLE EAST WILL BE SLOW AND CAN ONLY COME FROM THE TWO PLAYERS THEMSELVES. THIS IS WHAT HAS BEEN KEEPING HIM FROM GETTING PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN THE PEACE PROCESS, UNLIKE HIS PREDECESSOR BILL CLINTON. BUT TODAY PRESIDENT BUSH IS WELCOMING MAHMUD ABBAS, A GUEST FOR WHOM CHANGE IS URGENT. HE NEEDS TO LEAVE WASHINGTON WITH A U.S. COMMITMENT FOR MORE INVOLVEMENT IN GETTING THE PEACE PROCESS BACK ON TRACK. THE ISSUE HERE IS TO GET THE U.S. TO EXERT MORE PRESSURE ON ISRAEL. THE ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER HAS SET DRACONIAN CONDITIONS FOR THE 'FINAL SETTLEMENT.' AND THIS IS WHERE ABBAS ABSOLUTELY NEEDS BUSH'S HELP. IN WASHINGTON'S CIRCLES THE IDEA THAT THE ADMINISTRATION MUST NO LONGER HAVE THE TERMS OF ITS POLICY DICTATED BY ISRAEL IS BEGINNING TO GAIN GROUND. THIS NEW TONE . COULD LEAD PRESIDENT BUSH TO OVERCOME HIS RELUCTANCE TO GET INVOLVED AND WEIGH IN DIRECTLY ON THE PARTIES."

EUROPEAN ISSUES - REFERENDUM

"SAVING THE 'YES'"
SERGE JULY IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION (05/26): "IN SPITE OF HIS FORTY YEARS IN THE POLITICAL ARENA, CHIRAC HAS NEVERTHELESS MADE SEVERAL MISTAKES IN THE BATTLE BEING NOW WAGED. WITH THREE DAYS TO GO BEFORE THE REFERENDUM, HE STANDS ALONE AND UNPOPULAR FACING THE VOID. THE JUMP HE IS ABOUT TO TAKE CARRIES EITHER CONFIRMATION OF HIS FAILURE OR THE MAKINGS OF A 'YES' VOTE. HE KNOWS INSTINCTIVELY THAT IF THIS EVENING, DURING HIS ADDRESS, HE LIMITS HIS PITCH TO SAYING THAT THE CONSTITUTION IS GOOD FOR FRANCE AND ITS FUTURE, HE IS PRACTICALLY SURE TO PRECIPITATE A 'NO' VICTORY ALL BY HIMSELF. TO DISTINGUISH THE VOTE ON THE REFERENDUM FROM NATIONAL CONCERNS, HIS ONLY CHOICE IS TO ACCEPT TO DISSOLVE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN SEPTEMBER. THE FRENCH WOULD THEN VOTE TWICE: ONCE FOR THE CONSTITUTION AND ONCE TO ELECT A NEW ASSEMBLY. THERE WOULD BE NO CONFUSION BETWEEN EU ISSUES AND A SANCTION VOTE."

"WASHINGTON VOTES 'NO,' BEIJING IS STILL HESITATING"
JACQUES AMALRIC IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION (05/26): "NO ONE SHOULD TAKE SILENCE FOR INDIFFERENCE. ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO WASHINGTON AND BEIJING. LACK OF STATEMENTS FROM THESE TWO CAPITALS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE ISSUE OF THE EU'S CONSTRUCTION IS OF NO INTEREST TO THEM. ESPECIALLY TO THE U.S., WHERE, OTHER THAN A FEW KIND WORDS FROM PRESIDENT BUSH DURING HIS TRIP TO BRUSSELS, NO ONE WANTS TO SEE THE EMERGENCE OF A EUROPE-POWER. IT IS ENOUGH TO THINK BACK TO RUMSFELD'S SARCASM ON 'OLD EUROPE.' IF THE EUROPEAN TREATY WERE POSTPONED INDEFINITELY THIS WOULD NOT DISPLEASE THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION, WHICH HAS BARELY TURNED A BIT LESS ARROGANT SINCE ITS REVERSALS IN IRAQ AND HAS NEW DOUBTS ABOUT THE LEVEL OF 'FAITHFULNESS' IT CAN EXPECT FROM NEW EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. EVEN IF NOTHING IS BEING SAID, ON MONDAY IN WASHINGTON A FRENCH 'NO' WOULD BE GOOD NEWS FOR THE U.S. . WHICH IS LESS THAN EAGER TO SEE THE EMERGENCE OF A EUROPEAN POWER IN SEARCH OF INDEPENDENCE. CONVERSELY. BEIJING'S POSITION IS MORE AMBIVALENT." WOLFF